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 Please return this to J. A. Parker Tappk, Va.

Read & returned as requested above.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

22d Oct. 1883.

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John A. Parker Esq.: Much obliged for the opportunity of reading the enclosed.

JOHN SHERMAN...

Nov 15, '79.

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### LETTER FROM JOHN PAUL JONES<sup>1</sup> TO JOSEPH HEWES, May 19, 1776.

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[The original of the following letter, which is referred to in Sherburne's Paul Jones (p. 14, &c.), but, it is believed, never printed in full, is included in the very valuable collection of MSS. now preserved in the former home of Governor Johnston, at Edenton, N. C. We are indebted to Mrs. John G. Wood, of Edenton, and Judge W. J. Leake, of Richmond, for the copy used.]

Paul Jones had just returned from the cruise to the Bahamas, in which he served as first lieutenant of the Alfred. On

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<sup>1</sup>It is worth noting that, while there is no doubt that John Paul Jones lived for a time at Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania county, Virginia, his name never appears in the records of the town or county. By deed dated Aug. 16, 1770, Thos. Blanton and wife sold to William Paul, for £120 currency, lot 258 in the town of Fredericksburg. The will of Wm. Paul was dated March 22, 1772, and proved in Spotsylvania Dec. 16, 1774. He left his whole estate, which consisted chiefly of his house and lot, to his sister, Mary Young, and her eldest children, in Abigton, in the parish of Kirthbeen, in the Stewarty of Gallasay, North Britain. He appointed Wm. Templeman and Isaac Heslup executors; but, they refusing, John Atkinson, who had been one of the witnesses to the will, was appointed. The house owned by Wm. Paul is believed still to be standing on lot 258, but there is on record no conveyance of the lot from Paul's representatives. See "John Paul Jones as a Citizen of Virginia," this magazine, VII, 286.

the 10th of May he had been ordered to the command of the Providence, and arrived at New York on the 18th.]

ON BOARD THE SLOOP PROVIDENCE,

N. YORK, May 19th, 1776.

SIR,

I had the honor of writing you the History of our Cruise in the Fleet from the Capes of Delaware 'till our arrival at N. London the 14th ulto. inclosing an inventory of all the stores taken at N. Providence, &c.—the letter contained a particular account of the action with the Glasgow in an Extract from the Alfred's Log Book—it also contained some free thoughts on Certain Characters in the Fleet—it was inclosed to Mr. Sproat and by ill luck fell into hands not the most agreeable on its way to the Post Office from which circumstances I much fear it hath miscarried—for I have just now parted from Captn. Lenox and tho' he is late from Philadelphia he hath no account of any letters from me to his uncle Mr. Sproat. I now inclose you the minutes of two Court Martials held on board the Alfred, the Evidences at large excepted—the minutes have not yet been seen in print—in Consequence of the last Trial I was ordered to take the Command of this Vessel the 10th Cur. I arrived here yesterday afternoon in 36 hours from Rhode Island with a return of upward of 100 men besides Officers which Genl. Washington lent to the Fleet at N. London.—I left the A. Doria & Cabot at Rhode Island ready to sail together on a four weeks' Cruise.—What will become of the Alfred and Columbus heaven only knows—the seamen have been so very sickly since the Fleet returned to the Continent that it will be Impossible to man them without others can be entered.—I have landed Genl. Washington's Soldiers and shall now apply to shippingmen if any can be obtained but it appears that the seamen almost to a man had entered into the army before the Fleet was set on Foot, and I am well informed that there are four or five thousand seamen in the Land Service.

The unfortunate Engagement with the Glasgow seems to be a general reflection on the Officers of the Fleet—but a little reflection will set the matter in a true light—for no Offi-

cer who acts under the eye of a Superior and who doth not stand charged by that Superior for Cowardice or misconduct can [be] blamed on any occasion whatever.—For my own part I wish a General Enquiry might be made respecting the abilities of officers in all Stations—and then the Country would not be Cheated.

I may be wrong but in my opinion a Captain of the Navy ought to be a man of Strong & well connected sense with a tolerable Education, a Gentleman as well as a seaman both in Theory and Practice—for, want of learning and rude ungentle manners are by no means the Characteristick of an Officer. I have been led into this subject on feeling myself hurt as an Individual by the Censures that have been indiscriminately thrown out—for altho' my station confined me to the Alfred's lower Gun Deck where I commanded during the action & tho' the Commodore's letter which hath been published says—"all the Officers in the Alfred behaved well"—yet still the Public blames me among others for not taking the Enemy.

I declined the Command of this Sloop at Philadelphia—nor should I now have accepted it had it not been for the Rude unhappy Temper of my late Commander—I now reflect with Pleasure that I had Philosophy sufficient to avoid Quarreling with him—and that I even obtained his blessing at Parting—may he soon become of an affable even disposition, and may he find pleasure in communicating Happiness around him.

There is little Confidence to be placed in reports otherwise the Lieutenants of the Fleet might have reason to be uneasy when they are told that the several Committees have orders to appoint all the Officers for the New Ships except only the Captains.—I cannot think they will be so far overlooked who have at first stepped forth and shown at least a willingness—nor can I suppose that my own Conduct will in the Esteem of the Congress subject me to be superseded in favor of a younger Officer especially one who is said not to understand Navigation.—I mean the Lieutenant of the Cabot—who was put in Comm'd of the Fly at Reedy Island after I had declined it—I was then told that no new Commissions would be given—and I considered her as a paltry message Boat fit to be commanded by a midshipman—but on my appointment to the Providence

I was indeed astonished to find my seniority Questioned—the Commodore told me he must refer to the Congress—I have recd. no new Commission.—I wish the matter in dispute may first be cleared up. I will cheerfully abide by whatever you may think is right—at the same time I am ready at any time to have my pretensions enquired into by men who are Judges.

When I applied for a Lieutenancy I hoped in that rank to gain much useful knowledge from men of more experience than myself—I was however mistaken for instead of gaining information I was obliged to inform others. I formed an Exercise and trained the men so well to the Great Guns in the Alfred that they went thro' the motions of Broad Sides and Rounds as Exactly as Soldiers generally perform the Manual Exercises

When I get what men are to be had here—I am ordered back to Providence for further Instructions—the Sloop must be hove down—and considerably repaired and refitted before she can proceed properly on any Cruise. I should esteem myself happy in being sent for to Philadelphia to act under the more immediate direction of Congress especially one of the new Ships.—I must rely on your Interest herein.

The largest and I think by far the best of the Frigates was launched the day after I left Providence—but from what I can hear neither of them will equal the Philadelphia ships.—I left the Columbus heaving down and the Alfred hauling to the wharf.—I send this by the Commodore's Steward who hath leave to visit his wife at Phila. and will call on you on his return in a day or two. I expect that he will overtake me here if I succeed in getting men—if not he will follow me to Rhode Island and Providence.—May I hope for the honor of a letter from you by his hands—it will most singularly oblige me and greatly add to the favor already Conferred on

Sir

your much obliged  
and very humble Servant

JOHN P. JONES.

N. B.—If you have not recd. my last I will send a copy if desired.

The Hon'ble Joseph Hewes, Esquire, Philadelphia.